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Promoting Agropreneurship among Gen Y: An Integration of Individual, Institutional and Social Level Factors

Asliza Yusoff, Noor Hazlina Ahmad, Hasliza Abdul Halim

School of Management, University of Science Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

Despite its significant contribution to the country's economic growth and development, agriculture sector is not a popular place especially among Gen Y segment in Malaysia context. Given the high percentage of the population the segment represents, Gen Y is a great resource that need to be fully utilized for the better performance of both the sector and the country. Gen Y individuals in this country prefers to work in other sectors such as service and manufacturing for which they assume that the sectors are able to provide them with high income and better image. Given the issue of sustainable performance of agriculture and government emphasis on food security and nutrition for the people, coupled with increased individual needs for running their own business, the spirit of enterprise agropreneurship has developed. Sadly, however, due to the instability of agriculture sector and negative view held on it, it is the challenge for Malaysia to bring more Gen Y to become agropreneurs and work in agriculture. Hence, the paper conceptualize that an integration of factors at individual, institutional and social levels may enhance Gen Y's agropreneurial intention through the mediating role of perceived desirability and feasibility.

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INTRODUCTION

The surge of interest in sustainable development has seen scholars and policymakers redirecting their attentions to the role of agriculture sector in maintaining food security to the world population. Agriculture sector has now been earmarked as an important sector for a country's economic development due to the major role the sector plays in supplying food for the people. In developing country such as Malaysia, the agriculture sector is seen as a major contributor to the country's economy as it supplies food, provides job opportunity, earns from exports and provides raw materials for agro-based industries (Hassan, M.S., *et al.*, 2009; Okezie, C.A. and A.H. Baharuddin, 2012; Siwar, C., *et al.*, 2013). Back in mid 1980s, the country had suffered from the declines in economic development which was caused by world low market price for basic agricultural commodities. This incident has consequently impacted the country's policy whereby the interest on agriculture sector has been shifted to other sectors such as manufacturing and services. Given the recent focus on sustainable development, Malaysian government has recently injected new image on agriculture and agro-based sector in which it has

stimulated the interests in this sector to return (Selamat, Z. and A.M. Nasir, 2013). This new image and dimension of agriculture sector concerns with the involvement of entrepreneurship of agricultural product. The integration of both is known as 'agropreneurship'.

The concept of agropreneurship was being promoted to encourage setting up of enterprises related to the farm sector. Originally, the term entrepreneurship refers to as venturesome individuals who stimulated economic progress by finding new and better ways of doing things (Singh, A.P., 2013). Entrepreneurship is also linked with efforts to innovate and search for new ways and means to venture in profitable enterprises. Hence, agropreneurship can be seen as an act of creating a venture that incorporates elements of innovation in an agriculture sector. According to Nagalakshmi and Sudhakar (2013) agropreneurship refers to sustainable, community-oriented, and directly-marketed agriculture. Ahmed, Hasan (2011) on the other hand define the concept as an employment strategy that can lead to economic self-sufficiency of rural people. The more recent definition given by Bairwa, Lakra (2014) reflects agropreneurship as the profitable marriage of agriculture and

Corresponding Author: Noor Hazlina Ahmad, School of Management, University of Science Malaysia, 11800 USM, Penang, Malaysia.
Tel: +904-6533355, Fax+ +904-6353130, E-mail: hazlina@usm.my

entrepreneurship which turns a farm into agribusiness establishment in agriculture and allied sector. Based on those definition, agropreneurship can be referred as agricultural entrepreneurship activities which are regulated to produce, distribute, market, or transport agricultural products to generate income.

Agropreneurship is seen to contribute at both, individual and national levels. At individual level, agropreneurship contributes to improve performance of an individual whereby agropreneurship reduces one's poverty level by creating employment opportunity and allow an individual to be creative and innovative in meeting the demand from the consumers (Bairwa, S.L., *et al.*, 2014; Nagalakshmi, T. and A. Sudhakar, 2013; Osikabor, B., *et al.*, 2011). At national level, agropreneurship has a power to improve economic viability (Osikabor, B., *et al.*, 2011) and to make agriculture more attractive and profitable venture that can contribute largely to the national income by providing direct employment and income to the numerically large and vulnerable section of the society (Bairwa, S.L., *et al.*, 2014).

1.1 The Problem:

Despite the importance of agropreneurship and agriculture sector, Malaysia is facing with a shortage of young agricultural talent and skilful and educated agricultural workforce. The involvement of youth in agropreneurship activities is still discouraging where agropreneurs among youth in this country (aged 18 to 40 years) accounts for only 26 per cent (Abdullah, F.A., 2012). This figure is still far below despite the strong encouragement from the local government. In fact, based on the 9th Malaysian Plan, an amount of RM 511.9 million has been allocated with an aim to produce 260,928 agropreneurs (Mohamed, Z., 2011). Despite billions of ringgit has been allocated to support agropreneurship and agricultural activities among youth coupled with the strengthening of curriculum of agribusiness education in many higher education institutions with the aim to instil agropreneurship spirit and subsequently translate that into new venture, the involvement of youth in agropreneurship activities is still discouraging. The young people are simply not interested to work in agriculture sector possibly due to the instability of the sector hence they are more inclined to work in the manufacturing sector as that sector brings them better image, higher income and more advance urban infrastructure (Che Abdullah, N. and R. Mustapha, 2009).

Also, studies on agropreneurship is given less attention in the literature hence majority of the research has mainly focused on general entrepreneurship (Engle, R.L., *et al.*, 2010; Iakovleva, T., 2011; Schlaegel, C. and M. Koenig, 2014; Solesvik, M.Z., 2013). Given the energy that the Gen Y segment brings to the country's economic development, Gen Y agropreneurship is still an

under-researched area characterised by a scarcity of empirical data. The inclusion of Gen Y in the sample has been ignored, especially those who have undergone a few years course and training in agribusiness related program. Interestingly, a few studies have provided an overview of the literature on the Gen Y entrepreneur but lacking in terms of empirical investigation (Horsaengchai, W. and Y. Mamedova, 2011; Koe, W.L., *et al.*, 2012; Lindsay, N., 2005). Therefore the intent of the paper is to explore how an integration of factors at individual, institutional and social levels, via an integration of cognitive approach models such as the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Entrepreneurial Even Model (EEM), could enhance agropreneurship intention among Gen Y segment.

1.2 Gen Y as the movers of agropreneurship development in Malaysia:

Given the issue of sustainable performance in agriculture and government emphasis on food security and nutrition situation, the country definitely needs agro-based entrepreneurial workforce who is young, educated, stable, and has the capacity to seize short-term and long-term opportunities. These types of characteristics can be found among the Gen Y who possess characteristics necessary to become today's successful agropreneurs such as risk-takers, first digital generation to view entrepreneurship as an attractive life path, and do not conform to existing business models in the way they work (Sox, C.B., 2014). Since innovation and technology adoption in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) is one of the focus areas in creating globally competitive SMEs across all sectors as enhanced in SME Masterplan 2012-2020, the Gen Y agropreneurs is considered a promising target to create agricultural competitiveness because they are more inclined to collaborate with others, build their own brands, have a sense of social justice, are flexible, mission driven, employee-centric, and improvise their ways of working to complete the task.

Moreover, to ensure the sustainability of agriculture activities, the country will have to depend largely on highly ambitious workforce of Gen Y cohort. Statistically proven 84 per cent of Gen Y is willing to put extra effort and contribution for the purpose of succeeding in their job and company's (Hewlett, S.A., 2009). Compare to Gen X, recent evidence suggests that the Gen Y is civic-minded, love challenges and have high need for accomplishment (Gibson, J.W., 2009) of which these characteristics are crucial for the long lasting agriculture contribution to the society.

The focus on the Gen Y segment is also seen as a deliberate effort to cultivate sustainable agropreneurs in Malaysia. World widely, Gen Y population is estimated as high as 70 million in which the figure is double the size of Gen X. In Malaysia, Gen Y accounts 40 per cent of the

country's total population and is the fastest growing segment of the workforce today. A research by Szamosi (2007) shows a result that there is significant generational differences in inclination to be entrepreneurs where Gen Y have more entrepreneurial spirit compared to other population segments. They have strong orientation toward entrepreneurship and feel confident that they can achieve great results – as least earn a satisfactory living – by going into business for themselves (Herman, R. and J. Gioia, 2005).

2. Literature Review:

Apparently, motivation for agropreneurship is complex and involves factors at multiple levels such as individual level and social level (Shiri, N., 2012; Zakaria, H., 2014; Abdullah, F.A. and B. Abu Samah, 2013). Since the agropreneurship behavioural action (i.e. starting an agricultural-based firm) is an individual decision, individual characteristics are therefore sound determinants of an intention to found a new agricultural-based firm. Factors at individual level such as attitude, agropreneurial orientation, perceived behavioural control etc., are imperative in investigating agropreneurial intention as they have potential reasons in explaining why some individuals decide to actually embark in venture creation while others do not (Fitzsimmons, J.R. and E.J. Douglas, 2005).

In recent years, researchers have also shown an increased interest in investigating the role of institutions, particularly the academic institutions such as university, in influencing Gen Y students' entrepreneurial intention. Previous studies in the agropreneurship literature also indicate an association of support mechanism provided by university such as agropreneurship education (Mahmud, M.M., *et al.*, 2011; Mohamed, Z., *et al.*, 2012; Muhammad, M., 2013; Rezai, G., 2011). Evidently, academic institutions plays an essential role in shaping future agropreneurs by encouraging the young segment to be self-employed in agriculture sector. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore variables at institutional level such as the curriculum and content of agropreneurship education, agropreneurship experiential learning and perceived university support in enhancing agropreneurial intention among students.

Besides that, the fact that entrepreneurship cannot act in vacuum but react to the social environment surrounding them (Sadeghi, M., *et al.*, 2013) has called attention to be paid to the social level factors as well. It has been suggested that research regarding individuals' career choice, such as a choice to become agropreneurs, should not focus only on individuals' cognitive variables only but also to associate other environmental variables such as social, cultural and economic variable (Lent, R.W., 2000). The capability of social level factors such as subjective norm, social networking and perceived

availability of government support in influencing individuals' intention to become agropreneurs cannot just be omitted from investigation as there are both supporting and hindering factors among social environment factors (Lüthje, C. and N. Franke, 2004).

2.1 The Integration of TPB and EEM:

As discussed earlier, engaging in agropreneurial activities is an intentional and volitional. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the agropreneurship business creation it is sought to integrate a few social cognitive approaches such as Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM). The integration of TPB and EEM have existed in a few general entrepreneurship studies (Almobaarek, W.N. and T.S. Manolova, 2012; Kennedy, J., *et al.*, 2003; Schlaegel, C. and M. Koenig, 2014; Shook, C.L. and C. Bratianu, 2010; Solesvik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012). Despite the arguments that TPB and EEM overlaps each other in explaining humans' intention toward a certain behaviour that intention is a result of people' willingness and capability (Guerrero, M., 2008), both models' determinants are distinct constructs and that the models are both partially integrated (Krueger, N.F. and J. Kickul, 2006) as well as fully integrated (Shook, C.L., 2003; Solesvik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012).

Data from previous studies have identified the use of EEM constructs as mediating variables in attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control and intention relationship (Solesvik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012; Wang, C.K., 2001; Shook, C.L. and C. Bratianu, 2010; Shiri, N., 2012; Schlaegel, C. and M. Koenig, 2014 Oruoch, D.M., 2006; Kennedy, J., *et al.*, 2003; Grundstén, H., 2004; Almobaarek, W.N. and T.S. Manolova, 2012). According to Iakovleva, Kolvereid (2011) previous researches have used an argument by Bagozzi (1992) that attitude-intention relationship might be mediated by individual's desire to perform a certain behaviour and thus developed their research model by integrating the TPB and EEM. In the same way, Perugini and Bagozzi (2001) suggest that the intention to perform a specific behaviour is mainly motivated by the desire to perform this behaviour and to achieve a specific goal. Based on this, Figure 1 shows the proposed model of agropreneurship behaviours for further empirical investigation.

3. Determinants of Agropreneurial Intention:

3.1 Attitude toward agropreneurship:

The first factor of agropreneurial intention at individual level is attitude toward agropreneurial behaviour. Krueger, Reilly (2000) referred attitude toward entrepreneurial behaviour as individuals' perception of how an entrepreneurial behaviour is desirable, or not, to be performed. Attitude is also individuals' proneness to respond in either favourable or unfavourable way towards a certain

object of the attitude (Lindsay, N., 2005). In general, attitude is a feeling individuals hold about a concept. It is individuals' mental preparations toward a specific subject (Chen, Y.F. and M.C. Lai, 2010) which is developed based on personal favourable or unfavourable evaluation along the bad-good continuum about a certain concept (i.e. person, brand, ideology, etc.), developed from learning and experience, to react and behave in a consistent manner (Fini, R., *et al.*, 2012; Hsu, C.H. and S.S. Huang, 2012; Kautonen, T., 2013). It has been argued that people's action and behaviour are align with their attitude and that the attitude relies upon belief and anticipation about how the behaviour could give them personal impact (Krueger, N.F., 2000). A positive behavioural attitude is more likely to be developed when performing a certain behaviour is perceived to produce a positive result. In other words, the stronger the relationship between attitude toward entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour, the stronger will one's inclination to start a new business venture (Chen, Y.F. and M.C. Lai, 2010; Fini, R., *et al.*, 2012). Based on the literature, attitude toward agropreneurship can be defined as individual's concept about agricultural entrepreneurship, assessment, and inclination towards entrepreneurial behaviour or self-employment in agriculture sector (Ajzen, I. and M.

Fishbein, 2005; Chen, Y.F. and M.C. Lai, 2010; Fini, R., *et al.*, 2012; Hsu, C.H. and S.S. Huang, 2012; Kautonen, T., 2013; Krueger, N.F., 2000; Lindsay, N., 2005).

Recently scholars from numerous fields have examined the effects of attitude on intention and behaviour and presented contradictory results. While MacGillivray and Lynd-Stevenson (2013) found an insignificant relationship between attitude and intention, other studies have found otherwise (Fen, Y.S. and N.A. Sabaruddin, 2009; Hsu, C.H. and S.S. Huang, 2012; Krueger, N.F., 2000; Taylor, S.A., 2012). Results from these studies revealed that behavioural attitude was found to significantly predict behavioural intention with instrumental attitude as the strongest predictor. In the context of entrepreneurship, Schlaegel and Koenig (2014) in their meta-analytic study found that attitude toward behaviour correlates positively and significantly with entrepreneurial intentions. In agropreneurship area, Movahedi, Latifi (2013) found that attitude toward self-employment correlated positively and significantly with interest to do agricultural activities. Similarly, Abdullah and Naem Sulaiman (2013) found that attitude has significantly affect the interest among youth to get involved in agricultural entrepreneurship.

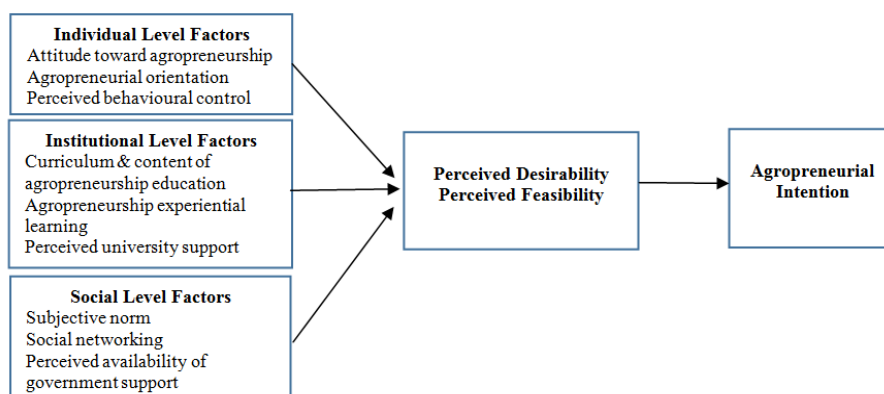


Fig. 1: Proposed conceptual framework.

3.2 Agropreneurial orientation:

Entrepreneurs is known as individuals who exploit opportunities that changes create (Drucker, P.F., 1985). In order for future entrepreneurs to successfully recognize and exploit entrepreneurial opportunities that exist in front of them, they must be highly entrepreneurial oriented. Individuals who are entrepreneurially oriented exhibit both higher levels of interest in creating new business venture as well as higher achievement motivation compared to those who are not (Levenburg, N.M. and T.V. Schwarz, 2008). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is the processes, practices, and decision-making activities applied by entrepreneurs which result in a birth of an entrepreneurial firm (Lumpkin, G.T. and G.G. Dess,

1996). The authors added that EO concerns with the intentions and actions played by entrepreneurs in a vital generative process with an aim to create a new venture. Bringing EO to the agropreneurship context and based on Lumpkin and Dess (1996), agropreneurial orientation (AO) therefore is the processes, practices and decision making activities undertaken by agropreneurs along the agropreneurial process to create a new agricultural business venture.

In the past two decades, EO has emerged as an important concept concerning a wide array of discipline such as entrepreneurship, organizational behaviour, marketing, strategic management and operation (Dess, G.G., 2011). Investigating the role of EO at individual level and within pre

entrepreneurship start-up decision, EO was found to significantly correlated with entrepreneurial intention (Ismail, K., *et al.*, 2013) and entrepreneurial desire (Tautila, V. and S. Down, 2012). Studies also revealed that start-up decision was indicated to be positively related to pro-activeness and risk-taking dimensions of EO (Kropp, F., 2008). It can be predicted that Gen Y who show higher level of risk taking in agropreneurship, innovatively create new agricultural-based products or modifying existing agricultural product and proactively devote to scanning and overseeing the environment to capture customers' new taste and preference and stay up-to-date with the business opponents will have higher intentions to become agropreneurs at some point of time after their graduation.

3.3 Perceived behavioural control (PBC):

According to Ajzen (1991, 2002) PBC refers to the belief individuals hold that concerns their ability to execute their planned behaviour and how they perceive that the planned behaviour is within their control. The stronger an individual holds a belief that executing a certain behaviour is within his/her control, the stronger his/her likelihood to behave in that certain way (Engle, R.L., *et al.*, 2010). Based on the suggestion that individuals are more likely to choose to perform behaviour that, in their opinion, they have the controllability and mastery (Moriani, J.A., *et al.*, 2011), Gen Y students who perceived themselves as having control and ability to perform agropreneurial behaviour are more likely to have higher intention to choose agropreneurship as their future career choice..

Research in entrepreneurship area has shown a different predictive power of PBC in explaining individuals' intention to become entrepreneurs. For example, research conducted by Liñán and Chen (2009) found that PBC influence entrepreneurial intention at different strength between students from two countries (Spain and Taiwan). Even that is the case, their study still revealed that the PBC and the other TPB antecedents (attitude toward behaviour) contribute to more than half of the variance (56 per cent) in students' intention to get involved in self-employed. Similar to the Liñán and Chen (2009)'s study, another study among students in three countries (Sweden, Finland, USA) found positive correlation between PBC and intention and that PBC was the strongest influence on students' intention compared to the other two TPB determinants (Autio, E., *et al.*, 2001). Indeed, positive association between PBC and entrepreneurial intention has been empirically proven in many studies (Engle, R.L., *et al.*, 2010; Fini, R., *et al.*, 2012; Kautonen, T., 2013; Schlaegel, C. and M. Koenig, 2014; Solesvik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012; Solesvik, M.Z., 2013). For instance, it was empirically exhibited that PBC has statistically significant ability and power in explaining students' intention to become entrepreneurs both meta-

analytically (Schlaegel, C. and M. Koenig, 2014) and across multiple countries.

3.4 Curriculum and content of agropreneurship education:

According to Turker and Selcuk (2009) individuals' entrepreneurial intention may be promoted by adequate education. Entrepreneurship education was found to be capable in raising individuals' attempt to actually perform the entrepreneurial behaviour at some point of time in their life (Souitaris, V., 2007). Previous research has also empirically revealed a result that attitudes and intention differ significantly between students who enrol in entrepreneurship education program when compared with those who do not. Keat, Selvarajah (2011) found that entrepreneurial curriculum and content of entrepreneurship education correlates positively and significantly with Malaysian university students' inclination toward entrepreneurship. Their study also found that entrepreneurial curriculum and content increase the likelihood of students to engage in entrepreneurship.

The main objective of the entrepreneurship programs is to equip young graduates with necessary knowledge and skills associated with agropreneurship to enable them to become full time successful agropreneurs. There are seven major categories of skills necessary in order to become successful agropreneurs such as communication skills, administration and leadership qualities, personal qualities, business and economic skills, computer, quantitative and management information skills, technical skills; and employment, academic and general experiences (Breazeale, D., *et al.*, 2004). The agropreneurship education with curriculum and content that develop those skills are predicted to be able to develop higher intention to become agropreneurs among the students.

3.5 Agropreneurship experiential learning:

Agropreneurship experiential learning is the process whereby knowledge regarding agropreneurship is created and developed through grasping and transformation of experience with an aim to develop students' positive perception of agropreneurship feasibility and desirability. Previous literature has supported the positive influence of experiential learning on intentions to become entrepreneurs. For example, an empirical study has revealed that students who participated in classroom-based learning has shown no significant effect on entrepreneurial engagement in contradict to stronger entrepreneurial engagement shown among students who participated in experiential learning (Ho, Y.P., 2014). In fact, the study exhibits a result that experiential learning was the strongest determinant in explaining students' entrepreneurial engagement.

Also, experiential learning as an approach of discovery learning was acknowledged to have an

ability to create right learning atmosphere, allow articulations and interactions of ideas, offers synergistic learning among different participants and create new meanings on students' knowledge, skills and experience (Smith, A.J., 2006). Students' participation in agropreneurial experiential learning can lead to the actual performance of agropreneurship venture creation by increasing students' agropreneurial intention as posited by Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006) that students' active involvement in entrepreneurship education lead to a birth of an enterprise. Through experiential learning, future agropreneurs as the experiential learners are able to establish multiple set of skills such as cognitive, emotional and physical in which the learning experience is heightened while at the same time developing capabilities to solve real-world problems (Baden, D. and C. Parkes, 2013).

3.6 Perceived university support (PUS):

Since university is the place where future agropreneurs systematically learns how to become successful agropreneurs, it should also be the place where these students turn for supports for initial venture creation. PUS can be defined as perceptions hold by students regarding the availability of the tangible and intangible assistance provided by their university in fostering agricultural entrepreneurial activities among students.

University support was found to be significantly associated with entrepreneurship development particularly in intensifying students' entrepreneurial intention. For instance, Hashemi, Hosseini (2012) found that university supportive conditions increases students' perceived self-efficacy and their involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Another study by Saeed, Yousafzai (2013) found that perceived university support has significantly influenced students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Similarly, Peterman and Kennedy (2003) found that college and university supportive environment and infrastructure is important in changing students' perception on entrepreneurship feasibility. Literature also suggested that certain types of university support policies and practices such as university venture funds (Lerner, J., 2005), venture creation approach (Ollila, S. and K. Williams-Middleton, 2011), university incubators and physical resources can encourage the development of entrepreneurial activities among students. Hence, Gen Y students' positive perception regarding the availability of university support is seen to have a power in impacting their intentions to embark in agropreneurship activities.

3.7 Subjective norm:

Performing agropreneurship requires individuals to get ready to face many kind of risks such as natural disaster (i.e. flood, animal disease, etc.), business risk and even financial risks. Because of

that, future agropreneurs definitely need approval, opinion and judgement from those who are important to them. According to Kolvereid (1996) and Solesvik, Westhead (2012) the formation of individual entrepreneurial intention is believed to be shaped by opinions and judgements by individuals who are important to entrepreneurs such as family, friends, teachers, etc. This social factor is termed as subjective norm by Ajzen (1991) of which he defined as perceived social pressure whether to perform or not to perform a certain behaviour.

The influence of subjective norms on individuals' intention to become entrepreneurs has been subject to much discussion and speculation since the twentieth century. However, the result of these studies are still unclear. While a few studies found that subjective norms has significantly correlates with individuals' entrepreneurial intentions (Engle, R.L., *et al.*, 2010; Iakovleva, T., 2011; Kautonen, T., 2013; Solesvik, M.Z., 2013), other studies have revealed contradictory results (Almobaireek, W.N. and T.S. Manolova, 2012; Autio, E., *et al.*, 2001; Fini, R., *et al.*, 2009; Krueger, N.F., 2000; Liñán, F. and Y.W. Chen, 2009; Shiri, N., 2012; Shook, C.L. and C. Bratianu, 2010; Solesvik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012). In these studies, no significant association between subjective norms and students' entrepreneurial intentions was found. Despite the contradictory findings on the strength and power of subjective norm as a predictor of individual entrepreneurial intention, the involvement of social pressure in shaping agropreneurial intention and behaviour cannot be denied. The reason behind it is because entrepreneurship is surrounded by its social environment and that individuals tend to follow and repeat the behaviour that is accepted and approved by their social group [32, 98, 106]. Linking to agropreneurship context, individuals will tend to perform the agropreneurship behaviour that they perceive important people (i.e. family and close friends) to them have succeeded and have accumulated wealth by engaging in agropreneurial activities.

3.8 Social networking:

In order for agropreneurs to successfully operate their business, the importance of resources available to them and knowledge is undeniable. Indeed, it was found that the unavailability of social network and lack of resources were hurdle to entrepreneurship (Sandhu, M.S., 2011) and contribute to hiccups along the agropreneurial process. Nascent agricultural-based business cannot be realized unless agropreneurs are able to acquire those resources (Sesen, H., 2013). Access to those resources indeed, can be gained via the availability of networking. Agropreneurs who are capable of developing meaningful networking, are agropreneurs that gained rewards from networking which enable them to make decision fast, build confidence, save lots of valuable

time and necessary cost as well as learn greatly from others' experience (Liñán, F. and F.J. Santos, 2007; Rampersad, G., 2012; Sequeira, J., 2007). At the initial state of agricultural venture creation process, potential agropreneurs can benefit from networking in at least two ways. First, agropreneurs can make use of networks to recognize business opportunities and chances. Second, being surrounded by networking allow agropreneurs to get access to resources which can range from financial to human such as skilled labours.

Obviously, agropreneurs' capability in creating and developing networks with people that are propinquity to them is essential in entrepreneurial process as the availability of networking could lead individuals to perform an agropreneurship behaviour as asserted by Fernández-Pérez, Alonso-Galicia (2014) networking plays a significant role in providing opportunity-relevant information and support to start a new business, acting as a natural link to the commercial world. Since becoming an agropreneurs, and also other kinds of entrepreneurs, are challenged with limited resources (Sequeira, J., 2007) and uncertainty, encouragement, information, support, and access to key resources provided by networks greatly influence Gen Y's intention to become agropreneurs in a favourable manner.

3.9 Perceived availability of government support:

Agropreneurship environment is dynamic and challenging. Along the agropreneurial process, agropreneurs may face many challenges including social barriers, economic barriers, regulations, access to finance and information, and their own managerial capacity to cope with risks and changes and to seize opportunities (Kahan, D., 2014). Therefore, government involvement plays a critical role in supporting the development of agropreneurship, be it in developed or developing countries like Malaysia (Ariff, M. and S.Y. Abubakar, 2003). In the case of starting a new business, where the nascent entrepreneurs may lack necessary capital, government support becomes very integral (Fatoki, O.O., 2010). Individuals who perceive government support is available for them to start their new agrobusiness may result in increased intention to actually engage in agropreneurship behaviours. Since agropreneurship environment is risky, the availability of government support builds the sense of security in future agropreneurs. These government initiation thus play a role in triggering the intentions to become agropreneurs and prompt individuals towards more ambitious start-up plans (Lüthje, C. and N. Franke, 2004).

Even though limited studies were found to investigate the role of government support in building the intention to become entrepreneurs among youth, a few studies have provided some literature on an association between the availability of government support in entrepreneurship. For

instance, a study by Fatoki (2010) found the absence of supports from both government and family, as well as lack of knowledge about government support, has become an obstacle for youth to actually embark in entrepreneurship. Another study which has included perception of government policy as one of the environmental factors in their investigation found that students who perceived favourable environment factors (i.e. the availability of government service support and state laws) have reported higher intention to become entrepreneurs. Based on this justification, it is proposed that Gen Y who perceive government's support as available in assisting them to perform the agropreneurial activities will have higher intentions to engage in agropreneurship behaviour at some point of time after their graduation.

4. Research Propositions:

Agropreneurship is perceived to be desirable and feasible to an individual possibly due to influences at multiple levels such as individual, institutional and social levels. For example, at individual level, attitude toward entrepreneurship was found to significantly influence students' perceived desirability (Solevik, M.Z., *et al.*, 2012). Their study also revealed that students who have reported higher level of PBC also reported higher perceived entrepreneurial feasibility. An entrepreneurship is perceived to be feasible or not due to factors such the existence of obstacles, personal capabilities and skills, confidence in the ability to carry out the task, perceived availability of resources necessary in creating a business and also regulatory conditions (Gasse, Y. and M. Tremblay, 2011; Liñán, F. and F.J. Santos, 2007). Since entrepreneur is the main character in any entrepreneurship who, according to Ahmad, Ramayah (2010), is a gatekeeper that maneuvers firm resources to achieve firm's objectives, their personal characteristics is therefore essential along the entrepreneurship process especially in building positive perception regarding the feasibility and desirability of an agropreneurship. At institutional level, education provided by college and university also plays an important role in shaping positive perception regarding agropreneurship among students. Besides factors at the aforementioned two levels, the authors also assert that family, the availability of social and financial supports and cultural environment also contribute to the development feasibility and desirability of an entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is proposed:

Proposition 1: *Factors at individual level, institutional level and social level are positively related to perceived desirability and perceived feasibility.*

An engagement in agropreneurship behaviour will only become a reality if people believe that they are capable enough to succeed in performing it. Individuals who perceived agropreneurship as

feasible and desirable would have stronger tendency to attain themselves with related knowledge, skills and competencies which has indirectly portrayed their intentions towards becoming agricultural entrepreneurs. Previous researches have confirmed the significant correlation between perceived feasibility and perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals with high level of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility were found to be more likely to engage in entrepreneurial events. If agropreneurship is viewed as a place where success and wealth creation can be achieved, intention to perform agropreneurial behaviours may develop. Hence, it is proposed:

Proposition 2: *Perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are positively related to agropreneurial intentions.*

Feasibility is very closely related to desirability [10, 21, 24]. People who find agropreneurship as feasible may also have desire to perform the agropreneurial behaviour. Therefore, factors that affect feasibility may also, indirectly if not directly, affect desirability, and vice versa. The formation of agropreneurial intentions could happen through the existence of positive perception (perception of feasibility and desirability) regarding agropreneurship itself. Therefore, it is assumed that before impacting intentions, the three-level factors discussed earlier will first impact individuals' perception of agropreneurship feasibility and desirability. Individuals with positive attitude toward agropreneurship tend to acquire themselves with necessary knowledge and skills so that the implementation of agropreneurship behaviour is within their control. Because of that, they may find that agropreneurship is feasible and thus develop intentions to perform it later after their graduation. Similarly, individuals who are exposed to the real world agropreneurs and agropreneurship through agropreneurship experiential learning courses while undergoing their agropreneurship education may find agropreneurship is actually feasible and desirable to perform and therefore have intention to actually involve in it as their future career choice. Besides that, having family members and meaningful social networks who could provide supports can also increase the possibility that they will consider agropreneurship as feasible and desirable career option.

Furthermore, previous findings have also shown the positive mediating effect of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability between entrepreneurial intentions and its predictors. Based on this, it is proposed:

Proposition 3: *Perceived desirability and perceived feasibility mediate the relationship between factors at individual, institutional level and social level and agropreneurial intentions.*

5. Conclusion:

The concept of agropreneurship has gradually getting attention in both, agriculture and entrepreneurship areas, especially in redefining new and modern agriculture. Recent study shows that agropreneurship is not only wishful thinking or a new hype: it has a profound impact on business growth and survival. It is conclusively shown that the emergence of the free market economies globally has resulted in the development of a new spirit of enterprise "Agropreneurship" and the increased individual need for responsibility for running their own businesses. However, it seems that the issue of agropreneurship behaviours among Gen Y graduates has escaped attention of the researchers. Therefore, it is assured that good research in the area of agropreneurship behaviours will add to the body of agropreneurship knowledge, business fundamental and business creation. It is imperative to understand how factors at integrated levels such as individual, institutional and social level, shape Gen Y's intentions to become agropreneurs. Analysis on agropreneurship intentions provides valuable knowledge to many parties such as governments, agencies, higher educational institutions (HEIs), SMEs and non-profit organizations.

For education providers, the framework provides valuable insights on effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Malaysia. While researches have shown that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by entrepreneurship courses, it still remains unclear though if the entrepreneurship education influences the agropreneurial intention as well. Therefore, entrepreneurship educators can benefit from the analysis to design well-directed course curricula that will significantly contribute not only to develop interests and proclivity among youth to become entrepreneurs, but also to actually take behavioural action to realize that mentioned intentions into a entrepreneurship reality. Thus, the analysis opens interesting avenues about how to better design and deliver agropreneurship education in particular.

The analysis will also be of great importance as a contribution to database on Gen Y segment. It will point out as to how these segment differ with respect to other segments. The findings will be useful in formulating policies and programs for Gen Y. It will show what they need and thus create a base for program planning for government and non-government agencies.

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